Applying to WPI

Prospective graduate students submit their applications for WPI’s science and engineering programs online at grad.wpi.edu. Applications for WPI’s graduate management programs are available at http://mgmt.wpi.edu/Graduate/admission.html.

Each department requires different credentials for admission. A table of each department’s requirements can be found on page 15.

WPI admission requirements include the following:

- A completed Application for Admission to Graduate Study Form, available online at grad.wpi.edu/+apply.
- A non-refundable $70 application fee (waived for WPI alumni and current WPI undergraduates).
- Official college transcripts in English from all accredited degree-granting institutions attended.

- Three letters of recommendation (and/or other references) from individuals who can comment on the applicant’s qualifications for pursuing graduate study in the chosen field.
- Several programs require a statement of purpose (see page 15). This is a brief essay discussing background, interests, academic intent, and the reasons the applicant feels s/he would benefit from the program.
- Proof of English language proficiency must be submitted by all applicants for whom English is not the first language with the exception of applicants who have attended a college or university in the United States full-time for at least one year. In order to prove English language proficiency, applicants must submit an official score report from either the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) or IELTS (International English Language Testing Service). The minimum scores for admission are:

  - TOEFL: 213 (computer based test)
  - 550 (paper-based test)
  - 79-80 (internet-based test)

  - IELTS: 6.5 overall band score with no sub-score lower than 6.0

  These are the minimum scores for admission to WPI; higher scores are required for teaching assistants.

WPI’s institutional code for the TOEFL is 3969. Scores are valid for two years from the test date. For more information, or to take the TOEFL, go to: www.toefl.org. For more information on the IELTS, or to take the exam, go to: www.ielts.org.

- Some departments require the Graduate Record Examination (GRE). Consult the table on page 15 to determine your department’s expectations. There is no WPI-wide minimum GRE score for admission. WPI’s school code for the GRE is 3969.

Applicants will receive information explaining how they can check the status of their applications after they submit the forms online. It takes approximately one week for the forms to be entered into WPI’s database. After this time, the applicant will have access to their information.

Unless the student is otherwise notified, the Graduate Admissions office will retain incomplete applications for one year after the application was started. The Office reserves the right to cancel an incomplete application at anytime, but it will continue to hold the incomplete forms in its files for a year.

All applications and all support material become the property of WPI once they have been received by the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Priority Deadlines

Funding is disbursed by the admissions committees in each of the academic departments. These decisions are made in tandem with the admissions decision, so there is no separate application for assistantships or fellowships.

Prospective students must indicate that they want to be considered for funding when they apply for admission. The application should be complete on or before January 15th to ensure consideration. Applications that are completed during the two weeks following January 15th will also receive the earliest consideration for funding.

With each passing month the availability of funds decreases, so applications should be completed, if possible, during the two-week processing period that runs from January 15th to January 31st.

Some programs also offer assistantships that begin in January. The deadline for these funds is October 15th.

Applicants who are not seeking funding may apply at any time.

If you are interested in securing a student loan, please contact the WPI Office of Financial Aid after you have accepted your offer of admission.

Admission

Each department, program, or sponsoring group is responsible for making admissions decisions. Their decisions are communicated to the applicants by the Office of Graduate Admissions.

Sometimes a department will admit a student to a degree program that differs from the program specified in the student’s application. Most typically, a department will admit a PhD applicant to a Master’s program. Students in such a position should contact the graduate coordinator in their program to find out what criteria they will have to meet to gain admission to the PhD program in the future.

An admitted student who would like to complete a second graduate degree in another department must apply for admission to the second program. In general,
standard application procedures are followed, but a copy of the first application and its supporting materials can sometimes be used as the basis for the second. No application fee is required.

An admitted MS student who wants to pursue a PhD in his or her home department can be admitted to the PhD program without completing a new application. Instead, the graduate coordinator or department chair will write a letter to the Dean of Graduate Studies, in care of his assistant in the Office of Graduate Studies, to the effect that the student has met the qualifications for admission to the PhD program. This letter will be copied to the Office of Graduate Admissions, the Registrar, and the departmental graduate studies committee.

Under some circumstances a student not yet admitted to a program may earn graduate credit towards the requirements for a graduate degree. But such students must keep in mind that permission to register does not constitute admission to a degree or certificate program, nor does it guarantee admission. It is also important to bear in mind that the number of credits that can be applied to the degree is limited. Students are thus encouraged to apply for admission to a program at the earliest possible date.

**Conditional Admission**

Conditional admission is offered to students who satisfy many of the criteria for admission to a program, but who lack some specific prerequisite or set of qualifications for graduate study. Typical deficiencies include inadequate preparation in English (for international students), an insufficient background in mathematics, or incomplete training in the student’s desired field of study.

The conditionally admitted student will be apprised of the conditions which must be met—usually a course or series of courses completed with a specified minimum grade—before he or she can be fully admitted to a program. In many cases, students fulfill these conditions either before they arrive at WPI or during their first year of study. They should consult with their graduate coordinator to discuss the best option for meeting the conditions that have been set. Each department monitors the progress of the conditionally admitted student and determines when the conditions of full admission have been met.

**Confirmation of Admission**

The letter of admission from the Office of Graduate Admissions indicates the semester for which admission is granted. The letter also asks the student to either accept or decline the offer of admission by a specified date by completing the Graduate Admission Response Form. Students who plan to attend are required to submit a non-refundable deposit of $500, which will be credited to their tuition when they arrive.

**Deferred Enrollment**

An admitted student who wishes to defer enrollment must make a request in writing to the Office of Graduate Admissions. Students typically receive a one-time deferral of up to twelve months. Funded students generally cannot defer their funding. WPI requires a $500 non-refundable deposit for all deferrals. This deposit will be credited to the student’s tuition upon arrival.

**Transfers and Waivers**

A student may petition to use graduate courses completed at other institutions to satisfy WPI graduate degree requirements. A maximum of one-third of the credit requirements for a graduate degree may be satisfied by courses taken elsewhere as long as they were not used to fulfill degree requirements at another institution.

Students should submit their petitions to their academic department or program; once they are approved they are filed with the Registrar.

To ensure that work completed at other institutions constitutes current practice in the field, a WPI program may set an expiration date on transfer credit. After this date, the course may not be counted towards a WPI degree.

Transferred courses are recorded on the student’s WPI transcript with the grade CR and are not included in the calculation of grade point averages. Grades earned in Biomedical Consortium courses, however, are recorded on the transcript as if they were taken at WPI itself.

A student with one or more WPI master’s degrees who is seeking an additional master’s degree from WPI may petition to apply up to nine prior credits towards the requirements for the subsequent degree.

A student who withdraws from a graduate program and is later readmitted may apply courses and other credits completed before the withdrawal toward the degree. The admitting program will determine at the time of readmission which courses taken by the student may be applied toward the degree and the latest date those courses may be applied. There is no limit, other than that imposed by the program, on the number of credits a readmitted student may use from prior admissions to the same degree program.

With the appropriate background, a student may ask permission to waive a required course and substitute a specified, more advanced course in the same discipline. Requests are subject to approval by the student’s program and must be filed with the Registrar within one year of the date of matriculation in the program. A program may waive (with specified substitutions) up to three required courses for a single student.

**Acceptability of Credit Applicable to an Advanced Degree**

- Graduate level credit, obtained from courses, thesis and project work, may include:
  - Coursework included in the approved Plan of Study.
  - Coursework completed at the graduate level and successfully transferred to WPI from other institutions (see Transfers and Waivers).
  - Graduate coursework completed at the undergraduate level at WPI and not applied toward another degree.
  - Up to 9 credit hours from a previous WPI master’s degree may be used in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a second master’s degree at WPI.
  - Coursework approved for the Combined WPI Bachelor’s/Master’s Program.
  - Project work done at the graduate level at WPI.
  - Thesis work done at the graduate level at WPI.

Departments and programs may limit the use of credit in any of these areas depending upon their specific departmental requirements.
Three-Year Bologna-Process Degrees

WPI welcomes applications from prospective graduate students who have three-year Bologna-compliant undergraduate degrees from European universities. Applicants who hold these credentials will be evaluated for regular admission on a case-by-case basis. They may be admitted conditionally if they require further preparation for graduate study. Please consult the departmental web pages to learn more about graduate admissions expectations and standards in your field of study.

Admission to Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs

WPI encourages interdisciplinary research. Students may apply for admission to interdisciplinary studies directly, but students interested in such options should do so with the assistance of WPI faculty, as these programs require internal sponsorship (see Interdisciplinary Doctoral Programs, pages 5 and 69).

Advanced Study for Non-degree students

Individuals with earned bachelor’s degrees may wish to enroll in a single course or a limited number of courses prior to applying for admission. Non-degree students may choose to be graded conventionally (A, B, C), or on a pass/fail basis. Pass/Fail grading must be chosen at the time of registration, and courses taken on the pass/fail basis are not transferable to any master’s degree program.

Non-admitted students may take a maximum of four graduate courses and receive letter grades in most departments. See department descriptions for specific information. Once these maximums are reached, additional course registrations will be changed to pass/fail and may not be used for degree credit.

The fact that a student has been allowed to register for graduate courses (and earn credit) does not guarantee that the student will be admitted to that department’s certificate or degree program at a later date. Students are therefore encouraged to apply for admission to a degree or certificate program prior to any course registration.